



**THE CARPET
FROM BAGDAD**
A ROMANCE OF BROADWAY AND THE SAHARA
BY HAROLD M'GRATH

[illegible]

CHAPTER XII.
(Continued)
The Caravan in the Desert.

ONCE George was snug inside the carriage it was driven off at a run toward the tombs of the caliphs. As the roads were not the levellest, the vehicle went most of the way upon two wheels.

Mohammed sat beside his victim, watchful and attentive. His intention was to take him no further than the outskirts of the city, forer to send back to the hotel a duly accredited messenger for the rug. After which he would turn George adrift, with the reasonable assurance that the young man would find some one to guide him back to the hotel.

But he misinterpreted that. George

the rug! And doubly hang the man who had sold it to him!

He felt, himself, being lifted to his feet. The rope round his ankles was thrown off. His feet stung under the renewed flow of blood. He waited for them to liberate his hands, but the galling rope was not disturbed. It was evident that the natives still entertained some respect for his fighting abilities. Next, they loosened him at the waist and a leg there; then came a lurch forward, a throw backward, the recurrence of the pain in his side, and he knew that he was upon the back of a camel, desert-bound. There were stirrups, a stirrup was grasped, and he was off. Through his legs he found the steel stirrups were too short, and at the time the upper turn of the steel chain bit his insteps. He eased himself by riding sideways, the proper way to ride a camel, with constant straining to keep his balance.

had recovered and was grimly getting the imprisoning ropes.

"You will need your strength," interposed Mohammed gently. "If I take the cloth from your mouth, will you promise me to cry out if I do anything of a punitive kind, and Mohammed, untied the handgags. "Listen. I mean you no harm. If you will send to the hotel

Fortunately, they were not travelling very fast, otherwise, what with the stabbing pains in his side, produced by the twisting of his muscles, he must have fallen. He was miserably hot, drenched with sweat, and his eyes were filled with tears of anger and pain filled his eyes and he burned down his cheeks in apathy and indifference.

And he, poor fool, had always been longing for an adventure, a large bit of

"Go to the deuce!" snapped George, still dizzy. The fighting mood hadn't evaporated by any means. "You know

"Fool!" cried the other, shaking George roughly.

"Geez! I had the rug, but it was stolen this afternoon. It was very weak and tired. I was very close to you," with renewed truculence; "and you may put that in your water-pipe and smoke it!"

The wind, blind, cold assassin, heaved a sigh, and the two men, with a

George went right up to the mouth. Life, on that part, was unkindly enough to attempt to sink his teeth in the brutal hand. Queer fancies lit through a man's head in times like this; for the ineffectuality of his bite reminded him of Hall-lowses and the tubs with the bobbing apples. One thing was certain: he

would kill this pagan the first opportunity. Rather a startling metamorphosis in the character of the man whose life in the chamber had passed in the peacefullest environments. And to kill him without the least compunction, too. To strike a man who couldn't help himself. "Help for a white man!" After such treatment he considered it anything but dishonorable to break his back. And where was Ryvane? "Help!"

Alarmed, seeing his arm round George's neck, and the third cry began with a gurgle and ended with a sigh.

Definitely the Arab had abandoned the prisoner's mouth for freedom, now he should drink to the bottom of the bitter cup, along with the others. He had had no real enemy against George. He was simply one of the boys of the game, playing. But now he saw that there was danger in liberating him. The other Mohammed cared less his own beard. To succeed in this capital game, he had to break him physically, too; to pay him back pound for pound; to bruise, to hurt, to rack him, that was all Mohammed desired. He would never let George go free, he said, himself, nor apparently to bestir himself about the future. Somewhere in the fight, presumably as he fell against the table, he had cut his hand, and he had bled freely. But this and when Mohammed threw him back, he fainted for the second time in his life. He regained himself in the corner of the table, and he saw the Arab's bulging eyes, and the thrifty Arabs had purlined the pearl-studded, the gold-cord buttons and the sphinx-cut links of the chain. He could only now see them lifted into the dropped drum he inconsiderately into the thick dust of the road. He strained again at his bonds, but presently, as he lay there, he saw a gleam of light, and he heard a voice.